

Examination structure for oral health therapy, dental therapy and dental hygiene

Updated October 2026

The examinations outlined below is indicative only and may be subject to change

	Written examination content includes:	Clinical examination requirements include:
Oral health therapy	Four, 2-hour long papers covering: 1. Ngaiotanga Professionalism - Professional, ethical and legal practice - Patient rights, privacy, confidentiality and informed consent - Scope of practice, professional responsibility and boundaries - Clinical documentation and record-keeping - Reflective practice and continuing competence 2. Whakawhiti Kōrero Communication - Communication with patients, whānau and carers - Communication of diagnoses, risks and treatment options - Communication with diverse populations and people with additional communication needs - Interprofessional communication, referral and clinical handover - Communication during urgent and emergency situations 3. Haumarutanga Ahurea Cultural Safety - Te Tiriti o Waitangi in oral health practice - Te Ao Māori, tikanga Māori and whānau-centred care - Cultural safety and culturally responsive practice - Bias, power and privilege in healthcare - Partnership with Māori patients, whānau and communities 4. Ngā Whakaaro Kaikini Critical Thinking - Clinical reasoning and decision-making - Interpretation of clinical, radiographic and diagnostic findings - Diagnosis and differential diagnosis - Evidence-based care planning - Recognition of clinical limitations and need for consultation or referral - Evaluation of treatment outcomes 5. Mōhiotanga Pūtaiao me te Haumaru Scientific and Clinical Knowledge - Head and neck anatomy, physiology and oral biology - Growth, development, tooth eruption and occlusion - Oral disease aetiology and pathology	Five days of simulated practice covering: - Preventive procedures - Restorative procedures - Radiography - Local anaesthesia - Periodontal instrumentation - Extractions - Orthodontic procedures (optional) - Oral Viva

	▪ Systemic disease and implications for oral healthcare ▪ Oral pathology and oral cancer ▪ Pharmacology and therapeutics ▪ Dental materials ▪ Dental radiology and radiation safety ▪ Infection prevention and control 6. Tiaki Tūroro Patient Care ▪ Medical, dental and social history taking and clinical examination ▪ Caries and periodontal assessment and management ▪ Preventive care, oral health education, dietary advice and behaviour change ▪ Fluoride therapies and fissure sealants ▪ Minimal intervention and restorative dentistry ▪ Primary tooth management, pulp therapy and stainless-steel crowns ▪ Non-surgical periodontal therapy and maintenance ▪ Local anaesthesia and pain management ▪ Medical and dental emergencies ▪ Dental and oral trauma ▪ Care across the lifespan and for people with diverse needs ▪ Growth, occlusion, orthodontic assessment and referral 7. Te Hauora ā-Waha o te Hapori Community Oral Health ▪ New Zealand oral health system and public health approaches ▪ Oral health epidemiology and population health ▪ Social determinants of health and oral health inequities ▪ Oral health promotion and population-level prevention ▪ Community engagement and partnership with whānau, hapū and iwi ▪ Planning and evaluation of community oral health initiatives	
Dental therapy	Three, 2-hour long papers covering: 1. Ngaiotanga Professionalism ▪ Professional, ethical and legal practice ▪ Patient rights, privacy, confidentiality and informed consent ▪ Scope of practice, professional responsibility and boundaries ▪ Clinical documentation and record-keeping ▪ Reflective practice and continuing competence 2. Whakawhiti Kōrero Communication ▪ Communication with patients, whānau and carers ▪ Communication of diagnoses, risks and treatment options ▪ Communication with diverse populations and people with additional communication needs ▪ Interprofessional communication, referral and clinical handover ▪ Communication during urgent and emergency situations	Four days of simulated practice covering: ▪ Preventive procedures ▪ Restorative procedures ▪ Radiography ▪ Local anaesthesia ▪ Extractions ▪ Oral Viva

	3. Haumarutanga Ahurea Cultural Safety ▪ Te Tiriti o Waitangi in oral health practice ▪ Te Ao Māori, tikanga Māori and whānau-centred care ▪ Cultural safety and culturally responsive practice ▪ Bias, power and privilege in healthcare ▪ Partnership with Māori patients, whānau and communities 4. Ngā Whakaaro Kaikini Critical Thinking ▪ Clinical reasoning and decision-making ▪ Interpretation of clinical, radiographic and diagnostic findings ▪ Diagnosis and differential diagnosis ▪ Evidence-based care planning ▪ Recognition of clinical limitations and need for consultation or referral ▪ Evaluation of treatment outcomes 5. Mōhiotanga Pūtaiao me te Haumaru Scientific and Clinical Knowledge ▪ Head and neck anatomy, physiology and oral biology ▪ Growth, development, tooth eruption and occlusion ▪ Oral disease aetiology and pathology ▪ Systemic disease and implications for oral healthcare ▪ Oral pathology and oral cancer ▪ Pharmacology and therapeutics ▪ Dental materials ▪ Dental radiology and radiation safety ▪ Infection prevention and control 6. Tiaki Tūroro Patient Care ▪ Medical, dental and social history taking and clinical examination ▪ Caries assessment and management ▪ Preventive care, oral health education, dietary advice and behaviour change ▪ Fluoride therapies and fissure sealants ▪ Minimal intervention and restorative dentistry ▪ Primary tooth management, pulp therapy and stainless-steel crowns ▪ Local anaesthesia and pain management ▪ Medical and dental emergencies ▪ Dental and oral trauma ▪ Care across the lifespan and for people with diverse needs ▪ Growth, occlusion, orthodontic assessment and referral 7. Te Hauora ā-Waha o te Hapori Community Oral Health ▪ New Zealand oral health system and public health approaches ▪ Oral health epidemiology and population health ▪ Social determinants of health and oral health inequities	
--	--	--

	- Oral health promotion and population-level prevention - Community engagement and partnership with whānau, hapū and iwi - Planning and evaluation of community oral health initiatives	
Dental hygiene	Three, 2-hour long papers covering: 1. Ngaiotanga Professionalism - Professional, ethical and legal practice - Patient rights, privacy, confidentiality and informed consent - Scope of practice, professional responsibility and boundaries - Clinical documentation and record-keeping - Reflective practice and continuing competence 2. Whakawhiti Kōrero Communication - Communication with patients, whānau and carers - Communication of diagnoses, risks and treatment options - Communication with diverse populations and people with additional communication needs - Interprofessional communication, referral and clinical handover - Communication during urgent and emergency situations 3. Haumarutanga Ahurea Cultural Safety - Te Tiriti o Waitangi in oral health practice - Te Ao Māori, tikanga Māori and whānau-centred care - Cultural safety and culturally responsive practice - Bias, power and privilege in healthcare - Partnership with Māori patients, whānau and communities 4. Ngā Whakaaro Kaikini Critical Thinking - Clinical reasoning and decision-making - Interpretation of clinical, radiographic and diagnostic findings - Diagnosis and differential diagnosis - Evidence-based care planning - Recognition of clinical limitations and need for consultation or referral - Evaluation of treatment outcomes 5. Mōhiotanga Pūtaiao me te Haumaru Scientific and Clinical Knowledge - Head and neck anatomy, physiology and oral biology - Growth, development, tooth eruption and occlusion - Oral disease aetiology and pathology - Systemic disease and implications for oral healthcare - Oral pathology and oral cancer - Pharmacology and therapeutics - Dental radiology and radiation safety - Infection prevention and control	Three days of simulated practice covering: - Preventive procedures - Radiography - Local anaesthesia - Periodontal instrumentation - Orthodontic procedures (optional) - Oral Viva

	6. Tiaki Tūroro Patient Care ▪ Medical, dental and social history taking and clinical examination ▪ Periodontal assessment and management ▪ Preventive care, oral health education, dietary advice and behaviour change ▪ Fluoride therapies and fissure sealants ▪ Non-surgical periodontal therapy and maintenance ▪ Local anaesthesia and pain management ▪ Medical and dental emergencies ▪ Dental and oral trauma ▪ Care across the lifespan and for people with diverse needs ▪ Growth, occlusion, orthodontic assessment and referral 7. Te Hauora ā-Waha o te Hapori Community Oral Health ▪ New Zealand oral health system and public health approaches ▪ Oral health epidemiology and population health ▪ Social determinants of health and oral health inequities ▪ Oral health promotion and population-level prevention ▪ Community engagement and partnership with whānau, hapū and iwi ▪ Planning and evaluation of community oral health initiatives	
--	--	--